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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## AN INDIAN ROOM.

BY LAURA B. STARR.



Tzar's frozen regions, and the kick-shaws from the celestial clime, underneath us; they must be the plunder of an individual trip or the souvenirs brought by friends who have visited Alaska, Mexico, or cruised along the shores of the blue Pacific in a "coaster."

An Indian room lately seen was decorated with so much taste that it was the admiration of all who beheld it. The lady who owned it was the happy possessor of a quantity of Indian curios which she had brought from Mexico and from that far-away Alaska of which we read so much and know so little. She was a woman of artistic tastes to which she gave full rein in arranging her trophies, and the result is a room that is decidedly unique.

The ceiling and walls were first attacked: the former she covered with paper of a warm ecru tint; a frieze, two feet and a half deep, was made of yellow cartridge paper, two shades darker than the ceiling. Along the lower edge of this all around the room, was placed a shelf of California redwood, eight inches wide, thoroughly oiled to bring out the grain of the wood; on this shelf, which toned beautifully with the paper, she placed her small Indian baskets, Mexican pottery and cus-cus fans, etc., etc.

All the wall space below the shelf she covered with the straw mats, which the Mexican calls petate, and upon which he lies when he sleeps; these she hung lengthwise and fastened with long finishing nails.

These mats are frequently used for hanging behind a picture, the soft color making an excellent background for anything. If one chance to have enough of them, they make very pretty dados.

Unique lattice work for the upper half of a window, or filling in the space over a door may be made of a petate, by cutting out five squares, and leaving three, alternately: one seen was very pretty; two gaily painted paddles were crossed and fastened above it.

The mats are of a warm light brown wood-color, varying somewhat in shade, according to the length of time they have been used, and cost in Victoria or on the coast twenty-five cents apiece.

But to return to our room; pictures were scattered here and there, and all about in places where they would show to good advantage, Indian baskets and hats were hung, the narrow yellow cigar ribbon being used to tie them with. A beautiful rug of pelican skins with serape border, measuring seven by four feet, the work of Mexican Indians in Sonora, was hung in a broad space underneath the shelf and makes, by far, one of the most interesting decorations. Below this hung an Apache war club, gay with strips of buckskin and colored beads, from one end of which fluttered two long feathers while the other is adorned with a huge wild boars tusk.

On the shelf were grouped Alaska baskets and hats, fans from India and pottery and fans from Mexico; as they all shade in yellow browns and brown reds they tone beautifully with the wall. A water color sketch of Alaska scenery hangs below the shelf on a mat of extra size with black stripes running through

it. An Alaska hat hangs over it, while underneath are grouped a gourd, rattle and beaks of birds.

The grate was never used and how to cover it up with something suited to the surroundings taxed this ladies ingenuity more than anything else. At last a bright idea came into her head, and forthwith she bought several skins of chamois leather and joined them together with feather stitching in colored silks, leaving them as nearly as possible in their original shapes, and using colored glass beads with the stitching. Sometimes they were allowed to lap, especially if near the bottom where the strip could be cut into fringe. To make the fringe on the sides and bottom heavy enough, extra strips were put underneath before cutting. A row of feather stitching and beads heads the fringe. The pattern for the border was taken from some of the baskets and painted broadly in water colors, in red, green, yellows and blues, copying the Indian colors as nearly as possible. Neither this description nor the pen and ink sketch which accompanies it gives much idea of the barbaric gorgeousness of this fabric which covered the shelf and hung nearly to the floor in a fall.

A large round basket which the Indians use for carrying fruit and vegetables was utilized as a wast-paper basket; the foundation was a warm brown color, with a woven pattern of yellow and black all of which was softened by age and use. This Madam lined with light leather, the joints being made with fine thongs of the same material. All around the edge are rope handles, some of which are wound with leather thongs, while on others the thongs are pendent, mixed with strings of colored beads.

Over the windows are decorations made of Chinese storm-coats, strips of straw matting fringed on one edge, with fans at the ends. In the center of one hangs a big acorn basket; from the other dangles a red brown piece of pottery decorated with heavy black lines.

A Navajo blanket serves as a portiere; it is woven of dark blue, red, green and white, and is heavy of weight and color. The pole is an Alpenstock which traveled all over Alaska with the owner, and which is elaborately carved in memory of divers and sundry events connected with the trip. The blanket is hung with wide thongs of chamois leather, painted in strips and dots in red and blue water color, the ends being finished with tassels of colored beads.

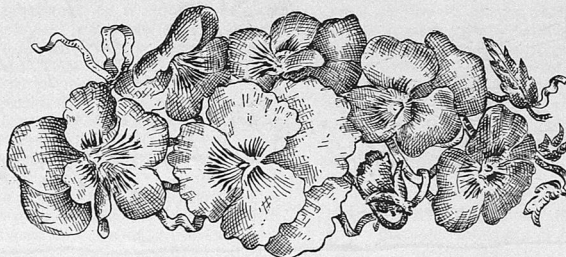
Another portiere was made of burlap and trimmed most effectively with a row of the small round mats found so plentifully in Alaska; from the center of each one hung a tassel made of leather thongs and strings of beads, matching the color of the mats.

A pretty hanging basket was made of one of the small round baskets, by sewing a long piece of silk around the edge, and drawing up with cord and tassel at the top. Some of the larger ones shaped like a wooden bowl were lined with chamois and garnished with strings of beads and fringes of leather, and used for holding photographs and other trifles.

On the shelf on the opposite side were carvings in Alaska black slate, queer, hideous little things, skin canoes with curious Indian figures in them, Indian gods, sea shells, a stuffed horned toad, a pair of aztec chiefs in feathers and war paint, done in clay.

On a table in the room were two beautiful pieces of Mexican onyx, one, the color of a banana, was carved in the exact shape of that delicious fruit, while the other was a large blotter exquisitely carved by the Indians; the top showed a bull fight in full blast, while one side bore a bull's head the other showing the little supple figure of a toreador.

Everything in the room was in keeping and of excellent tone. A beautifully woven table cover was a quipil, the waist of an Indian girls dress; the divan was covered with the bright plaid skirt of the same, the pillows were covered with the gaily covered aprons worn by the Indian women in Guatamala. Even though the first object had been to preserve the mementoes of various trips, everything was put to use and seemed to serve a purpose, so that the charm of the whole place was indescribably unique and interesting.



proach the excellence of antique specimens. Lo, too, with Venetian glass and silk embroideries. But why further enumerate. If old arts die, new requirements evolve others in their place. No preceding century approached the present in beauty and variety of decorative enrichments. If we have lost some secrets, we have recovered others, and the spirit of inventiveness is ever at work.

## LIGHT AND COLOR.

By HESTER M. POOLE.

**S**OMETHING which many decorators and housekeepers have yet to learn is to adapt wall-tints to the exposure of the room. Russets, citrines, olives and browns dominate in long narrow suites lighted from the north, while rooms with a southern outlook glow with cream and gold, yellow and crimson. Whatever for the moment may be the prevailing mode is slavishly followed. "It is the style, you know," settles the question of light and color.

The drawing-room may as well be sacrificed to the god fashion irrespective of artistic sense, but the sitting-room and bed-chambers never. For the mood and in some sense health, of those who sit within doors day in and day out, deserve consideration. Take for instance olive, citrine, or dull brown for a room looking northward, or even a deep crimson, the shade that kills and absorbs all artificial light, unless it be the electrical lights which is not yet subservient to ordinary lares and penates. Who can doubt that the temper and cheerfulness of the habitual occupants of such a room will suffer sad eclipse?

For a sitting-room with a northern exposure or one dimly lighted, nothing is more satisfying than a wall-tint of lemon. If it be paper there may be small indeterminate figures in orange or a pale golden brown and the ceiling ought to be lighter than the sides, hardly more than an ivory. It will not take offence at the juxtaposition of any natural wood nor of that painted brown, steel color or electric blue. The furnishings may be dark wood brown, citrine or blue, anything which accords with the yellow. It is the reflection from large masses of color which gives rise to cheerfulness or depression, not that from furnishings. A sitting-room which delights all who enter, is covered with ingrain paper of peacock-blue tint. The deep frieze, also solid ingrain, is simply terra-cotta red, the picture moulding being a narrow strip of ebonized wood; but the glory of it all is in the ceiling.

Only two windows looking westward light the long room, and from them seems to stream a deep yellow radiance as from the setting sun. Gradually melting and fading away, it blends into a delicate blue which grows deeper when it meets the opposite wall. A few light clouds flee away on either hand, and an occasional bird flits from side to side. Then, as if the walls were an enclosure opening heavenward, the tops of the rose-vines come trailing up unconventionally as roses will, bearing lush yellow, pink and rosy beauties, half open buds and leaves of various sizes, decreasing and ending before reaching the center. In one place a couple of bright hued birds are picking at a detached flower, at another the petals are falling from the stem. It was the work of an



AN INDIAN ROOM, BY HELEN HYDE. (See page 38.)